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8.—*Life and Times of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.* By JAMES PARTON.
New York: Mason and Brothers. 1864. 2 vols. 12mo. pp. 627
and 707.

THIS work will add greatly to Mr. Parton's already well-established reputation as an historical biographer. It is a book of larger scope, of wider interest, and of greater importance than either of his previous productions. While displaying the same vivacity of mind, the same liberality of sentiment, the same ardor of feeling, and freshness of style, and fertility of illustration as his former writings, it evinces deeper research, more confirmed principles, and a greater maturity of judgment and temperance of statement. It is the book of an author master of his own powers and confident of his strength.

Without adding much in the way of new material to our knowledge of Franklin's life, which indeed was impossible after the exact and thorough biography, and the admirable and very complete collection of the writings of Franklin, by President Sparks, Mr. Parton has so used the materials at his hand, has illustrated them from so many sources, and has worked them up with such skill, as to present a living and animated portrait of his great subject, full of interest and instruction, not only to those hitherto unfamiliar with the details of Franklin's life, but also to those hitherto best acquainted with them. He deserves the gratitude of Americans for the manner in which he has accomplished his task, by which attention will be still more drawn to the example; and a fresh sympathy be awakened in the character and career, of Franklin.

There are a few passages in the book which a just criticism might condemn,—vivacity of style occasionally passing the bounds of good taste, and imperfect reflection appearing in the guise of deep thought ; but these are slight blemishes on the general excellence of the work. There are very few biographers in English literature who narrate as well as Mr. Parton, or who sustain the interest of the reader so steadily ; few who enter with clearer insight into the characters of the men concerning whom they write, or show quicker perceptions of the relations of circumstances. In this, as in his other works, though perhaps in a less degree than in them, Mr. Parton shows occasionally a defective moral judgment in regard to the nature of certain actions and opinions ; but his intention is invariably correct, and when he errs in his estimate of men, this fault springs not so much from want of principle as from want of firmness and consistency of thought, combined with a generous but superabundant charity. His error springs from no perversity or twist of mind, such as disfigure and discredit the work of Mr. Carlyle, the great imaginative biographer.

In Franklin's life Mr. Parton had a subject peculiarly fitted for his genius. Franklin is the ideal type of the Yankee. His virtues and his faults are alike those of the Yankee; and his career is not less typical than his character. The lesson of his life is well worthy the study of those who would understand the actual nature of the American people and the growth of American social and political institutions, and of those, too, who hope for and believe in the development of a nobler and higher type of national character under the influences of liberty, justice, and equal rights organized in those institutions. We commend Mr. Parton's book most warmly to all such.

9.—*Beadle's Dime Books.—Novels and Library of Fiction; Biographies; Song-Books; School Series; Hand-Books for Popular Use; Hand-Books of Games, &c.; &c., &c.* New York. 1859—1864. 12mo.

A YOUNG friend of ours was recently suffering from that most harassing of complaints, *convalescence*, of which the remedy consists in copious draughts of amusement, prescribed by the patient. Literature was imperatively called for, and administered in the shape of Sir Walter Scott's novels. These did very well for a day or two,—when, the convalescence running into satiety of the most malignant type, a new remedy was demanded, and the *clamor de profundis* arose. “I wish I had a *Dime Novel*.” The coveted medicament was obtained, and at once took vigorous hold of the system. The rapidity of cure effected by it induced us to investigate somewhat more deeply into the attractions and character of the “Dime Books” of all kinds, and a pile of forty-five volumes—all, with the exception of a few double numbers, sold at ten cents each—lies before us, being merely a selection from among them.

These works are issued by Messrs. Beadle & Co., of New York, in virtue of an enterprise started in the year 1859. They already amount to several hundred separate publications, and circulate to the extent of many hundred thousands. This need hardly be stated to any one who is in the way of casting his eye on the counter of any railway book-stall or newsdealer's shop. But the statistical statement, from authority, may excite some interest,—that, up to April 1st, an aggregate of five millions of Beadle's Dime Books had been put in circulation, of which half at least were novels, nearly a third songs, and the remainder hand-books, biographies, &c. After this we are prepared for colossal statements as to the millions of reams of paper employed, &c. The sales